

ABBA The Visitors







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The Visitors was first released in Sweden as Polar POLS 342 on November 30, 1981. Recording sessions began in March 1981 and continued until November 1981. The album was recorded at Polar Music Studios in Stockholm, Sweden.

— With Dick Cavett on the television show Dick Cavett Meets ABBA, April 1981.

■ The journey towards the end

Linear notes by Carl Magnus Palm

The Visitors, released at the end of November 1981, was ABBA's eighth and final studio album. For the group it had been a complicated LP to put together; they were nearing the end of the ABBA story.

The year of 1981 had started with a bit of sad news. Two years after Björn and Agnetha announced their divorce, Benny and Frida issued a statement that they had also decided to go their separate ways. The world raised its eyebrows at the continued decision on part of all four members to continue recording as ABBA. But however strange it may seem, they still enjoyed working together in the studio. It was a different kind of relationship between the four now – Björn had remarried in January, and Benny would also tie the knot with a new wife before the year was over – but the Andersson/Ulvæus songwriting partnership was as solid as ever, and certainly, Agnetha and Frida still knew how to sing. None of the four could see a reason to put a stop to ABBA. The group's lyrics had become increasingly

personal over the past few years, and perhaps no more so than on the first batch of songs written for the new album. When *All Is Said And Done*, recorded in March, featured an emotional lead vocal from Frida. The words detailed the feelings of a couple splitting up – Björn later admitted that Benny and Frida's divorce had coloured much of the lyrics he wrote for the song.

In *Slipping Through My Fingers*, recorded around the same time, Björn was writing more specifically about his own life. The idea for the lyrics came from watching his daughter Linda going away to school – she had started her first year in the Autumn of 1980. The experience put Björn in a pensive mood, and he started reflecting on where all the time had passed since Linda's birth. Those thoughts transformed into the lyrics for *Slipping Through My Fingers*, naturally performed by Linda's mother Agnetha.

The third title in this group of new recordings, *Two For The Price Of One*, was a more lightweight number, featuring Björn

ABBA at Polar Music Studios during the making of *The Visitors*.





himself on lead vocals. The lyrics were a somewhat bizarre story about a man answering an ad in the personal columns.

After this first session period, ABBA took a break from recording and taped a television special entitled *Dick Cavett Meets ABBA*. As the title indicates, part of the special consisted of an interview with four members, conducted by the famous Ameri-

gle from the album, *One Of Us*. This Agnetha-led track again detailed the effects of splitting up from a partner. In the eyes and ears of the record-buying public it was hard not to conclude that the group members were singing about themselves. *One Of Us* turned out to be ABBA's last major worldwide hit.

The flipside of the single, *Should I Laugh Or Cry*, featured Frida on lead vocals. It was one of the stronger of ABBA's single

"In August 1982, ABBA began their very last recordings"

can talk show host Dick Cavett. The second half of the programme was then devoted to a live concert, taped in front of a television studio audience. Aside from a string of hits from the past, ABBA performed both *Slipping Through My Fingers* and *Two For The Price Of One* during this concert.

A few abortive album sessions followed in May, and it wasn't until September that ABBA were back on track with the album again. Among the songs recorded in the Autumn was *I Let The Music Speak*. With its theatrical mood and shifting sections, it was a song that pointed towards an ambition that Björn and Benny had harboured for several years: to write a musical. Later in 1981, they would have their first meeting with lyricist Tim Rice to discuss such a project. Three years later the trio released the concept album for their musical *Chess*.

Also recorded during the Autumn sessions was the first sin-

B-sides, and over the years it has become something of a cult favourite among the group's most devoted fans. *Should I Laugh Or Cry* is featured as a bonus selection on this CD.

The Visitors showed that ABBA were evolving into a more mature group. For instance, the lyrics to the atmospheric title track dealt with the dangerous situation for dissidents in the Soviet Union at the time.

Like ABBA's albums usually did, *The Visitors* stormed up the charts most everywhere. It was a number one LP in Great Britain, Sweden, The Netherlands and West Germany, to name but a few countries. Meanwhile, the ABBA members themselves took an extended break from the group. In January 1982, Björn and Benny both became fathers again, and Frida spent a few months recording her first solo album in seven years, *Something's Going*

ABBA's Final Years

On, produced by Phil Collins. In May the group was back together in the studio again, recording tracks for their next album. But the sessions were not going well. ABBA had begun running out of energy and motivation, not least because Björn and Benny's thoughts were starting to drift towards their prospective musical project with Tim Rice.

The group decided to postpone their album plans. Instead, they would release a compilation double album of their most popular singles from 1973 to 1982. For this purpose they would also record a couple of new tracks that could be released as singles. The songs would also be included on the compilation package, *The Singles – The First Ten Years*.

In August 1982, ABBA began what turned out to be their very last recording sessions. When they were over, they had produced three new tracks. The first single from these sessions was *The Day Before You Came* backed with *Cassandra*. Both tracks have been included as bonus tracks on this CD.

The Day Before You Came was the last ABBA track to be recorded, and was arguably one of their finest accomplishments. However, when it was released as a single in October 1982, it met with widely opposing fates. In several European countries it was a convincing Top 5 hit. But in Great Britain, the place that Björn and Benny always regarded as the home of successful, finger-on-the-pulse pop music, the song only peaked

just outside the Top 30. The next single was *Under Attack*, which is featured as a bonus selection on this CD. *Under Attack* was ABBA's latest release as an active group, but like *The Day Before You Came*, it didn't fare very well on the charts. It was as if everything was falling into place: ABBA were tired of being ABBA, and the record-buying public had started looking elsewhere for new sounds, new styles and new faces.

The group decided to take a break. Björn and Benny would write their musical together with Tim Rice, and in the meantime Agnetha and Frida would make solo albums. But the break turned out to be permanent. After the Chess musical had been released on record, and then staged in London in the Spring of 1986, all motivation to continue with ABBA had disappeared.

The general public seemed to forget about ABBA for a few years, but in the early 1990s things started stirring again. The compilation album *ABBA Gold*, which has sold more than 20 million copies worldwide at the time of writing, was released in 1992, kickstarting a revival that has since refused to die down.

While Frida and Agnetha have chosen to keep a lower profile as artists for most of this time, Björn and Benny took charge of the ABBA legacy again at the end of the 1990s. With the staging of the successful musical *Mamma Mia!*, based on ABBA songs, they have found a way to let the group's music live on well into the new millennium. ■

The picture that adorned the single sleeve for *The Day Before You Came*.





The visitors 'Crackin' Up'

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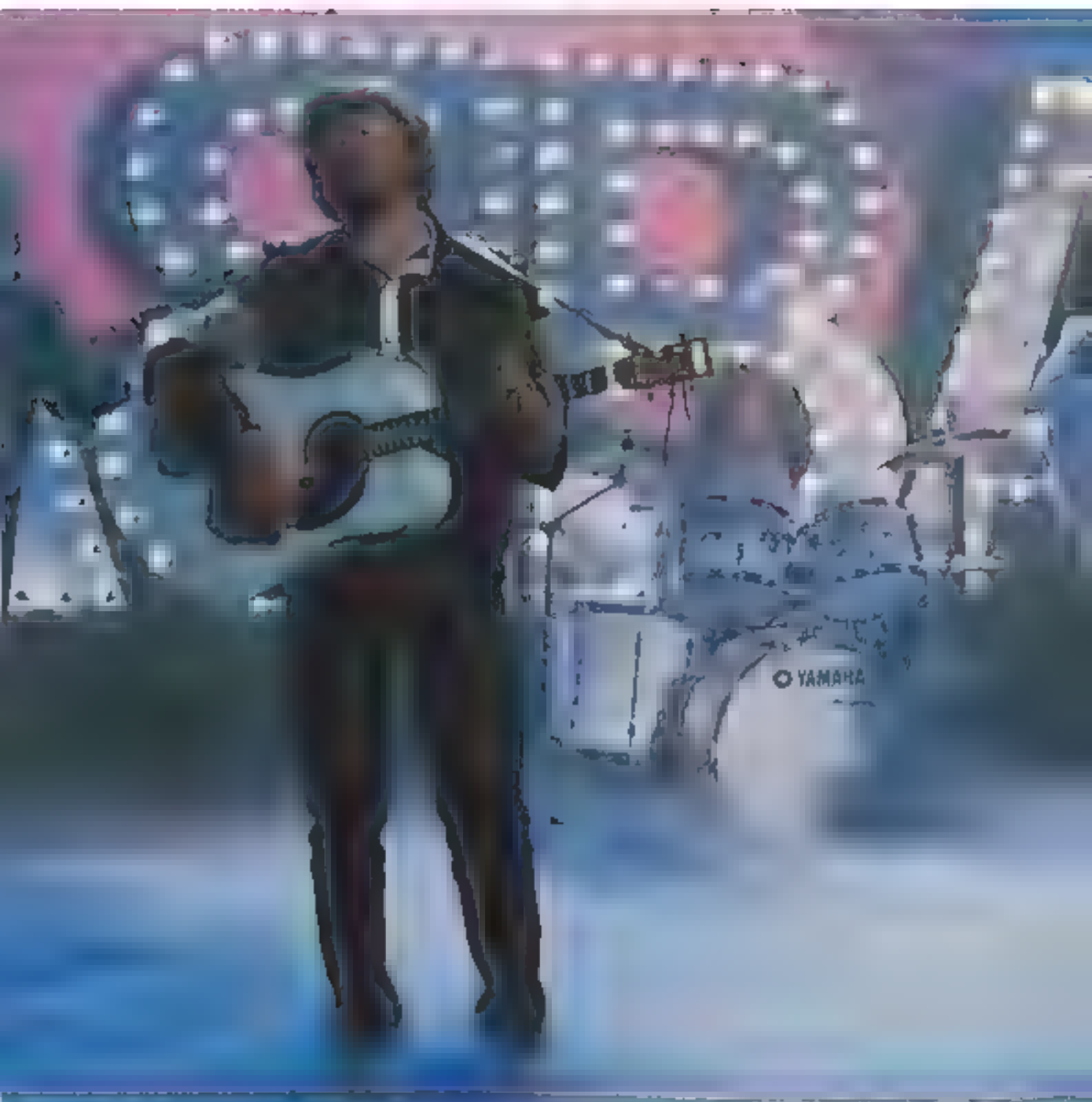
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Head over heels
 Breaking her way
 Pushing through unknown jungles every day
 She's a girl with a taste for the world
 The world is like a playground
 where she goes rushing
 Head over heels
 Setting the pace
 Running the gauntlet in a whirl of lace
 She's extreme, if you know what I mean
 Her man is one admirer
 He's so courageous but he's constantly tired
 Each time when he speaks his mind
 She puts his hand and says, "That's all very fine"
 Even that will go your own
 What you're mine
 And with no trace of hesitation she keeps going
 Head over heels
 Breaking her way
 Pushing through unknown jungles every day
 She's a girl with a taste for the world
 The world is like a playground
 where she goes rushing
 Head over heels
 Setting the pace
 Running the gauntlet in a whirl of lace
 She's extreme, if you know what I mean
 You hear her voice everywhere
 Taking the chase
 She's a leading lady
 And with no trace of hesitation she keeps going
 Head over heels

Breaking her way
 Pushing through unknown jungles every day
 She's a girl with a taste for the world
 The world is like a playground
 where she goes rushing
 Head over heels
 Setting the pace
 Running the gauntlet in a whirl of lace
 She's extreme, if you know what I mean
 Her man is one admirer
 And she goes
 Head over heels

03 When All Is Said And Done

03 When All Is Said And Done
 03 When All Is Said And Done

Here's to us and many more and then we'll say the toll
 Deep inside built up as the autumn chill
 Birds of passage, you and me
 We fly insouciantly
 When the summer's over
 and the dark clouds hide the sun
 Neither you nor I'm to blame when all is said and done
 In our lives we have made
 some strange and lovely finds
 Slightly worn but cherished and not too old for us
 We're still striving for the sky
 No time for humble pie
 Thanks to all your generous love
 and thanks for all the fun
 Neither you nor I'm to blame when all is said and done

It's so strange when you're down and lying on the floor
 how you rise, shake your head,
 get up and ask for more
 Care-headed and open-eyed
 With nothing left to fear
 Standing calmly at the crossroads, no desire to run
 There's no hurry any more when all is said and done
 Standing calmly at the crossroads, no desire to run
 There's no hurry any more when all is said and done

04 Soldiers

04 Soldiers
 04 Soldiers

Do hope what I'm tearing
 Do see the signs that are
 On this war-torn
 Is it true that the best is waiting
 Spinning in his restless sleep tonight
 In the pale moonlight
 In the grip of his cold December
 you and I have reason to remember
 Soldiers write the songs that soldiers sing
 The songs that you and I don't sing
 They blow their horns and march along
 They drum their drums and look so strong
 You'd think that marching in the world was wrong
 Soldiers write the songs that soldiers sing
 The songs that you and I won't sing
 It's not look the other way
 Taking a chance
 cause if the ragier starts to play
 We too must fight

and all the children and me on my
The one that the
and all the
and all the

One of us is crying

One of us is crying

in the night for
singing at the night

When the was a time when the
and all the

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Of Two For The Price Of One

and all the
and all the

He had a little girl and a little girl

He played the piano at the local railway station

And all the children

And all the children

He had the children and all the children

The cries for help from different people of different ages

But they had nothing to say, at least not until the day

When something special he read, this is what I said

He had a little girl and a little girl
He had a little girl and a little girl
He had a little girl and a little girl
He had a little girl and a little girl

He had the number and a voice said "The White"

The voice was faint and it sounded like a boy

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

He had a little girl and a little girl

Slipping Through My Fingers

and all the
and all the

She was a little girl

She was a little girl

She was a little girl

She was a little girl

She was a little girl

She was a little girl

She was a little girl

She was a little girl

and all the
and all the
and all the
and all the

And without really

Entering her world

and all the

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She was a little girl

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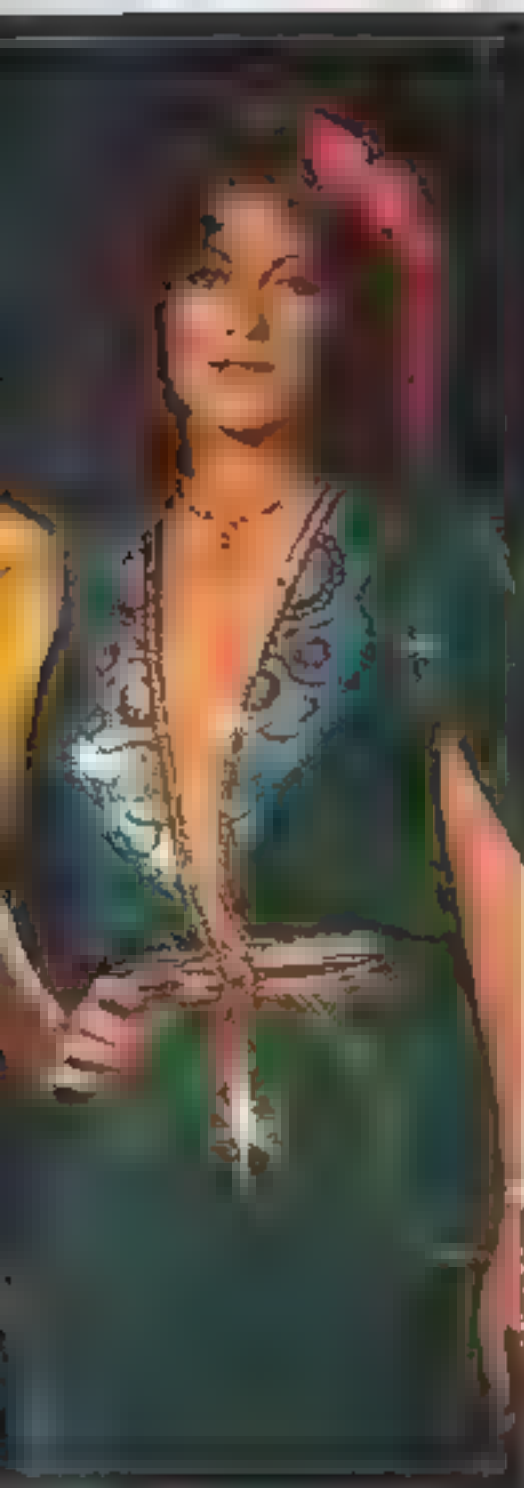
She was a little girl

She was a little girl

John and Denny at the studio, Spring '98







What happened to her

A delicate adventure

From her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

Like An Angel Passing Through My Room

By Anne Bradstreet

1693

My wife, my wife

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

What happened to her

A delicate adventure

From her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

Should I Laugh Or Cry

By Anne Bradstreet

1693

My wife, my wife

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

And in her bed

Passing by the window, my dear wife, my dear wife

High and mighty his barbed ribs
 A toothy grin in his eyes
 Standing there on his toes to grow it some
 I'd see us
 All see is a big before
 Halfway up to the moon
 He's wrapped up in a warm and safe cocoon
 Of an eternal life
 So should laugh or cry
 Strange strangers how slow
 Dangerously indifferent I have grown
 Cold as a stone
 In that most beautiful part where there was pain before
 Far away he rambles on I know my heart will go dry
 And wonder should laugh or cry
 High and mighty his barbed ribs
 A toothy grin in his eyes
 Standing there on his toes to grow it some
 I'd see us
 All see is a big before
 Halfway up to the moon
 He's wrapped up in a warm and safe cocoon
 Of an eternal life
 So should laugh or cry

11 The Day Before You Came

M. Anderson's 19th Avenue
 Union Square AB

must have left my house at eight.
 Because always do
 My train, I'm certain
 Left the station just when it was due

must have read the morning paper long after lunch
 And having gotten through the editorial.
 No doubt must have looked
 must have made my drink around a quarter after one
 With letters to be read
 And heard of modern things to be signed
 must have gone to lunch at half past twelve or so
 The usual place, the usual bunch
 And sit on top of the
 I'm pretty sure if my bag rattled
 The day before you came
 must have at my seventh (perhaps) of half past two
 And at the time never even noticed was that
 must have kept on dragging.
 Through the business of the day
 Without really knowing anything, tied a part of me away
 And must have to
 There's no exception in the rule
 A matter of routine
 I've done it ever since Iashed school
 The train back home again
 Undoubtedly must have read the evening paper then
 Or yes, I'm sure my life was kept within its usual frame
 The day before you came
 must have opened my front door at eight o'clock or so
 And stood along the way,
 To buy some Chinese food to go
 I'm sure had my dinner watching something on TV
 I haven't got a drink.
 A single episode of DASH that I didn't see
 must have gone to bed around a quarter after ten
 Had a lot of sleep, and so I'm to be in bed by then
 must have had a sleep

The latest one by Marilyn French
 Or something in that style
 It's funny but had no sense of being without you
 The day before you came
 And suddenly up for yet another night
 And rising on the roof
 must have heard the sound of rain
 The day before you came

12 Cassandra

M. Anderson's 19th Avenue
 Union Square AB

Down in the street they're all singing and shouting
 Staying alive though the city is dead
 Riding their horses without a word of laughter
 While you are crying alone on your bed
 Fly Cassandra that no one believed in
 Did then again you were lost from the ship
 Now we read suffer and tell our distress
 Began, playing smart, acting in our distress
 How the sun day is dawning
 Some of us wanted but none of us could
 Listen to words of warning
 Nobody knew how to fight
 And we were caught in our dream
 Sorry Cassandra, don't believe
 You really had the power
 Only spent as currency you would waste
 And the first hour

So in the morning you who will be taking
 Now that your father and sister are gone
 There is no reason for you to linger
 You're grieving dead but still moving on
 You know the future is casting a shadow
 No one else sees it but you know your fate
 Picking your bags, being slow and thorough
 Knowing, though you're late, that ship is sure to wait
 Sorry Cassandra | misunderstood
 Now the last day is dawning
 Some of us wanted but none of us could
 Listen to words of warning
 But on the darkest of nights
 Nobody knew how to fight
 And we were caught in our sleep
 Sorry Cassandra I didn't believe
 You really had the power
 I only saw it as dreams you would wake
 Until the final hour
 I watched the ship leaving harbor at sunrise
 Sails almost slack in the cool morning air
 She stood on deck, just a tiny figure
 Rigid and restrained, blue eyes filled with pain
 Sorry Cassandra | misunderstood
 Now the last day is dawning
 Some of us wanted but none of us could
 Listen to words of warning
 But on the darkest of nights
 Nobody knew how to fight
 And we were caught in our sleep
 Sorry Cassandra I didn't believe
 You really had the power
 I only saw it as dreams you would wake

Until the final hour
 I'm sorry Cassandra
 I'm sorry Cassandra

13 Under Attack

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Don't know how to take it, can't know where to go
 My resistance running low
 And every day the hold is getting tighter,
 And it troubles me so
 (You know that I'm nobody's fool)
 I'm nobody's fool and yet it's clear to me
 I don't have a strategy
 It's just like taking candy from a baby
 And I wish I could be
 Under attack, I'm being taken
 About to crack, defenses breaking
 Won't somebody please have a heart
 Come and rescue me now 'cause I'm falling apart
 Under attack, I'm taking cover
 He's on my track, my chasing lover
 Thinking nothing can stop him now
 Should I want to, I'm not sure I would know how
 This is getting crazy, I should tell him so
 Really let my anger show
 Persuade him that the answer to his questions,
 is a definite no
 I'm kind of battered I suppose
 Guess I'm kind of flustered but I'm scared as well
 Something like a magic spell
 I hardly dare to think of what could happen

Where I'd be if I fell
 Under attack, I'm being taken
 About to crack, defenses breaking
 Won't somebody please have a heart
 Come and rescue me now 'cause I'm falling apart
 Under attack, I'm taking cover
 He's on my track, my chasing lover
 Thinking nothing can stop him now
 Should I want to, I'm not sure I would know how
 Under attack, I'm being taken
 About to crack, defenses breaking
 Won't somebody please have a heart
 Come and rescue me now 'cause I'm falling apart
 Under attack, I'm taking cover
 He's on my track, my chasing lover
 Thinking nothing can stop him now
 Should I want to, I'm not sure I would know how

Credits

Musicians: Drums: Ola Brunkert, Jon Strömers, The Mothers, Cassandra and Under Attack Per Lindvall. Percussion: Åke Söderqvist. Bass: Rutger Gunnarsson. Electric and acoustic guitars: Larsje Widenberg (Jon Under Attack and Cassandra) Janna Schaffert. Acoustic Guitars: Björn Ulvæus. Keyboards and synthesizers: Benny Andersson. Flute and clarinnet / Let The Music Speak: Jan Kling. Mandolins One Of Us: The Three Boys.

Produced by Benny Andersson and Björn Ulvæus. Digitally recorded and mixed at Polar Music Studios, Stockholm. Engineered by Michael B. Tretow.

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Björn and Benny with masterful sound engineer, Michael B. Tretow.





